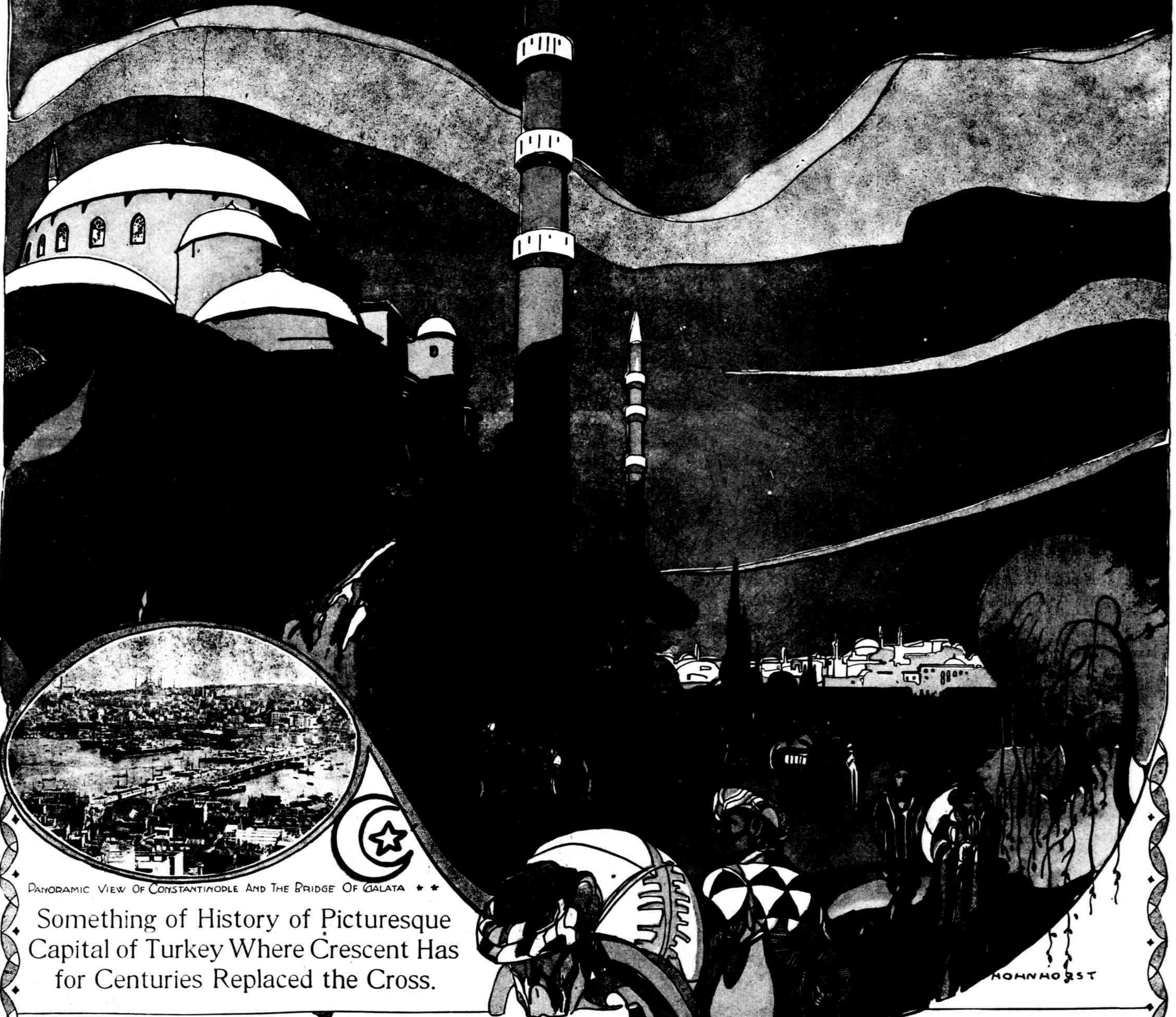


# BYZANTIUM-CONSTANTINOPLE-NEXT?



PANORAMIC VIEW OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE BRIDGE OF GALATA

Something of History of Picturesque Capital of Turkey Where Crescent Has for Centuries Replaced the Cross.

A MODERN crusader came out of the north with armor of steel plate, and zeal measured by fifteen-inch iron barrels. And the living spirit, whose symbol is the curve of a crescent, trembled; for had it not been prophesied that the might of Allah shall fall at the hands of the Christians, even as Christianity went down before the green flag? And is it now that Constantinople, the historic, coveted of nations and picture city of the world, is again to fly the cross above the sword?

Supersaturate with history as is the city that Catherine the Great called the "key to the door of Russia," it seems almost meet that it should be tossed into the melting pot that now is Europe, to again leave its imprint on the chronicles of world-making. Out of the past, clouded by the haze of centuries, the story of the city stretched broken and chaotic, lost in mazes of tradition; caught round historic loves and hates, wrecked on ambitions, writhing under clashing religions. Is this latest turn of fate to work disaster? And if crosses are now in the making to replace the crescents so proudly flown, what is to be the effect on Europe and the east—on America?

Long ago—long, long ago!—the chariots of Zenobia rattled across the plains to the east. Then Cheops was unquarried, the Iliad unsung, the fathers of Abram still dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees. Then from the shores in which the allied armies are now forming Paris sailed on that fatal trip to Greece, where Venus led him into the arms of the wife of Menelaus and he repaid Grecian hospitality by eloping with Helen, for whose sake were launched a thousand ships "to burn the topless towers of Troy." And to these shores came Agamemnon, king of men, with all the powers of Greece, to avenge the wrong done to his brother by the fascinating son of the aged king of Troy. And so was written the first chapter of the romance of the eastern city, round treachery and intrigue and illicit love and revenge, when the city was the half mythical village of song and story.

Where the sounds of war are now waking echoes of the past, the Greeks set up that wooden horse which opened the gates of Troy to their devastating forces and sealed the fate of the grandsons of Dardanus, founder of the city, whose name the strait and one of the strongest forts still bear. There it was that Patroclus was killed, and around the ancient walls Achilles dragged Hector by the hair of his head; and there Achilles himself was slain. And there history stops, tied round the year 1307 B. C., and only the songs of Homer and of Vergil perpetuate its memory. Never a ship of war sailed through the Dardanelles for centuries after the fall of Troy. Only merchant ships plied

between the Black sea and the Mediterranean. And then on the Thracian Bosphorus in 658 B. C. there sprang up the dream city of Byzantium, in which was founded a new era of literature and art and blended the characteristics of the orient and the west and the barbarous east.

Then the long, pointed windows began to appear round shut-in porticoes; dim fires in bronze swinging lamps gleamed, upside-down, in the water of the Golden Horn. Streamers of song floated through latticed doors; at evening white hands hung timidly over sills; vells fluttered in courts where fountains sprayed. And to the market places came the ships of the world, piling gold into the coffers of the city. That was the second chapter in the story of the city.

Constantine the Great, first Christian emperor and ruler of the civilized world, saw Byzantium in 330, and decided that on the waterways between Europe and Asia lay the destined center of his empire.

And Constantine razed the walls of Byzantium and most of the buildings, and erected in its place the most magnificent city the world had ever seen. And from that new Rome he ruled the world; and from there ruled the monarchs after him for eleven hundred and twenty-three years of imperial splendor.

The east and west were divided during the time of Justinian, about 500 A. D., and a little later the Catholic or Universal church divided. Thereafter the Eastern Empire, with Constantinople as its capital, was more Greek than Roman. And that was the third chapter of the story.

"The spider has spun her web in the palace of the Caesars,  
The owl has sung her watch song on the towers of Afrasiab."

With this bit of Persian poetry between his lips, Mohammed II, in May, 1453, claimed Constantinople for himself and Islamism. The cross, under Constantine XI, had gone down before the crescent, and the green flag desecrated the holy places as the conqueror rode through the gate of St. Romanus. The Turks overran southeastern Europe, even to the gates of Vienna. It was during this period that the prophecy was found, written on a piece of paper, in the mouth of a statue famed as an oracle, in one of the city's public squares, that predicted the eventual reversion of Constantinople to the Russians.

For more than four hundred years now Mohammedanism has held sway in the city whose relation to the Russian church is that of Rome to the nations of Roman Catholic faith. Geographically, historically and religiously Russia has held, for the

representative to inhabit the palace of the ecumenical patriarch. Are the days bringing the fulfillment of her wishes?

While it is an exaggeration to ascribe the mastery of the world to the possessor of Constantinople, it can't be denied that the city occupies, from a political, strategic and economic point of view, one of the most valuable and important sites in the world. It is a natural fortress of great strength, protected at the rear by mountain and swamp, and by those wonderful straits, the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. It lies at the very point where Europe and Asia meet and which connects the Black sea with the Mediterranean, and even with the Indian ocean by way of the Suez canal and the Red sea.

Sung by poets, painted by artists, "Istanbul," or "the place over there," as the modern Greek phrase "in the city" is often translated, has been the burden of almost intemperate eulogy since the early days when it stood for the easternmost settlement of Greek culture in Europe.

It is in reality a city of contrasts. It is within sight of Mitylene, the home of the poetess Sappho; of Mount Ida, and the islands of Lemnos, Tenedos and Samothrace—the very land of Homer's poems. Sailing through the Hellespont, the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn, three towns appear—Stamboul, the Turkish capital; Galata, the European town, and Scutari. Every section of the population has its own quarter. In the capital on the southern side of the Golden Horn there are great mosques, the porte and government offices, bazars and native cafes.

The streets are narrow alleys, crooked and dirty, filled with garbage and the yellow pariah dogs that roam in packs through the day and howl through the night. There are broad open squares, like unkempt back lots. And above it all rises a medley of mosques and minarets, palaces and enchanting kiosks, gay in color, decorated with superb metal work. Built over the seven hills are seraglios that dominate the near or distant view of the city with unrivaled magnificence.

The mosques rise in huge masses of clustered, rectangular structures, their soaring, slender minarets cutting the blue sky in tapering outline, broken only by the balconies. Wonderful among all the mosques—and among all the world's places of worship—is the mosque of St. Sophia, built as a cathedral by Constantine in 326; rebuilt by Justinian and converted later into a mosque. Under it in vaults, ever jealously guarded by the Turks, are treasures rich in historic value that have tantalized archeologists for years. Precious manuscripts, libraries containing many of the lost classics, lyrics of Sappho, plays of Menander, the lost books of Livy and Aristotle are thought to be there, with 3,000 books from the sultan's library.

past half thousand years, that her civil representative is entitled to sit on the throne in the seraglio, and her ecclesiastical repre-